

Sport

Run into the ground

Head coach anger at ‘poor’ athletics track

Iain Withers

EAST END councils have not done enough to nurture athletics talent ahead of the Olympics, the Head Coach of Victoria Harriers Athletics Club has claimed.

Alf Vicars told the Hackney Post that facilities at his club - the closest athletics team to the 2012 games site - had fallen into disrepair.

The Harriers’ 19-year-old running track at Mile End Stadium – where current triple jump world indoor champion Phillips Idowu used to train – is nine years overdue for replacement and badly worn. Vicars said the broken surface is now causing injuries to young athletes.

“A replacement is way overdue. The track is pretty poor. When the tracks get hard and you’re doing a lot of training on them it tends to bring on shin splints,” he said. “A lot of the athletes suffer from that and that’s because of the hardness of the track.

Floodlighting at the stadium



Head coach Alf Vicars



© Danny McL

Mile End Stadium’s badly worn track is the closest training ground to the 2012 Olympics site in Stratford

is also faulty and prone to black outs.

“The pylons have been there since 1966,” Mr Vicars said. “They’ve got a company coming in and they keep coming back but it’s poor to be honest.”

Mr Vicars added that support from both Hackney Council and

Tower Hamlets Council has been lacking.

“In other areas they’ve set up funds to help try to find some potential Olympic athletes. I don’t think the council in Tower Hamlets has done anything about it and I don’t think the council in Hackney has done anything about it either.

They’ve been very slow coming forward.

“I understand why they’re spending so much money on regeneration but without the athletics and without the sport there couldn’t be this regeneration.

“We’re three years away from the Olympics and I don’t

think Tower Hamlets has done anything towards trying to find and support Olympic athletes through this time.

“There are better facilities elsewhere but there are bad transport links to these.”

Hackney and Tower Hamlets councils were not available for comment.

Boyd is back in town



© Simon O’Connell

Leyton Orient scorer Andy Boyd will play Walsall this weekend after a full recovery

Football

Daniel Igra

LEYTON Orient top scorer Andy Boyd is set to make his comeback from injury against Walsall this weekend as the Os chase a fourth consecutive victory.

Os captain Stephen Purches told the Hackney Post that the return of Boyd would be a

“boost” for the League One side, who have seen their fortunes revived since the appointment of manager Geraint Williams in early February.

The Hackney outfit have won their last three games, climbing four points above the relegation zone into 17th place.

Purches said Boyd, who has scored 12 goals this season, would be in training today after a month spent on the

sidelines with knee ligament damage.

“It’s a boost having him back. Most of the boys are fit and they’re pushing for places.

“We’ve had competition in the squad for a while now and it’s benefiting the team.”

Purches added, however, that Boyd’s goal-scoring record would not exclude him from this competition. In the striker’s absence, Simon Church, on loan from Reading,

and Scott McGleish had formed a “strong partnership”, he said.

Purches reserved special praise for Welsh under-21 international Church, who scored the winner in the 0-1 victory away to Stockport last weekend and another in the 3-1 defeat of Carlisle

‘It’s a boost having him back’

on Tuesday.

“He’s a hard working lad, has been getting himself into the right positions and in the last couple of games he’s found the net – which is everything you want in a striker.”

The Os skipper said that whatever team was picked would be strong enough to see off Walsall, who lie in 13th place in the league.

“Obviously they’ve got people like Michael Ricketts, who’s played for England, and they’re a strong, powerful side.

“But we’re all working desperately hard, and we’re going in the right direction.

“The manager is gradually bringing in his own ideas, style and how he wants us to play. He’s wanted us to play more tactically in the last couple of games and fortunately it’s paid off.”

News in brief

Clapton comeback

Clapton Rangers avenged last week’s defeat at Lapton with a 4-1 victory over their rivals.

Clapton club secretary Mark Whyte said justice had been done after the cup defeat the week before.

“Lapton try to score early and shut up shop. They play ugly football; we play the beautiful game.”

Islamic games

Muslim women from Hackney will compete in the National Girls Eid Cup Festival to celebrate Islamic culture. Events include athletics, handball and clay pigeon shooting from the Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme this Saturday at the SCORE sports complex.

Chelsea beaten

The Tottenham Hotspur reserve side hammered Chelsea 4-0 on Monday night.

Leyton Orient hosted the match, which saw first-team Spurs regulars including David Bentley, Gareth Bale take apart the Chelsea B side.

Frazier Campbell’s deft chip over Rhys Taylor was the goal of the game.